



HEALTHY HABITS THAT HELP AS YOU AGE

You may have gazed with envy at the neighbor's car, the one that looks and runs great despite being years old and having hundreds of thousands of miles on the odometer. Of course, there's no secret to keeping a car like new. You have to know how to treat it when it's no longer new – when it needs routine maintenance and a little more.

Your overall wellbeing is like that. Yes, there are habits that are good for you throughout your life, but some of the things you do to maintain good health at age 50 are not the same as the things that kept you in tip-top shape at 25. Making adjustments as we age helps us live longer and live better.

KEYS TO A LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE

There's near consensus in mainstream medical research on what you should do to lead a healthy life. The basics are the same as the things that promote longevity. A recent report by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says a study involving about 17,000 people found four keys to living longer. They are exercising regularly, avoiding tobacco use, eating a healthy diet and drinking alcohol in moderation.

These behaviors are good for you at any stage of life. Here are a few tips on how to make the most of these healthy habits as you age.

- » **Broaden your ideas about exercise.** Perhaps running a mile was once just the warm-up for your exercise routine. That may not be the case anymore. Staying active as you age is what's most important. Can't run a fast mile these days? Take a brisk, half-hour walk four or five days a week. Adjust your expectations of the benefits of exercise. For example, even if it's too late to pump iron for bodybuilding, you still can use moderate weight training to improve your strength and balance, thus avoiding falls. You'll get something out of getting moving even late in life.
- » **Eat healthy and eat less.** Your slowing metabolism and other changes as you age mean you're burning fewer calories. If you continue taking in the same amount, the unburned calories will be stored as fat. As you get older, it becomes more important to make every bite count by selecting foods that are high in nutrients and low in calories.
- » **It's never too late to quit smoking.** You may think after 20, 30 or 40 years of smoking that there's no point in giving it up, and the damage is done. That's not true. You will improve your health when you give up tobacco. You may need help breaking a long-time nicotine addiction. Your EAP can help.
- » **As you get older, it's more important to drink alcohol in moderation and to do so with care.** Changes in your body will heighten the effects of drinking. You're also more likely to be on medications that can interact badly with alcohol.

The CDC study found that if you adhere to all four of these healthy habits, you'll have a 63 percent chance of living longer than those who ignore this sound advice. And, just as it is with the car that's still running great after all those years and all those miles, the earlier you start taking care, the better your chances of staying healthy over the long haul.

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